

Bride-to-be receives vending machine ring

Written by Elizabeth Barrett

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Couple will wed in Gothenburg on dating anniversary

Tori Preitauer once told Dillon McMichael she wasn't interested in an extravagant and costly engagement ring.

So on the evening of Oct. 5, 2012, imagine her surprise when she found a fancy ring box in the couple's closet.

Tori, a 2009 graduate of Gothenburg High School, shares an apartment with Dillon in Seward and attends Concordia University.

Dillon, a 2011 GHS graduate, commutes to Southeast Community College in Milford.

He'd decided to propose on the couple's four-year dating anniversary.

"I had already picked out the ring and it was on order but I decided that we should go casually look at some rings while we were at the mall," he explained.

The motivation behind a trip to a jewelry store in nearby Lincoln was more for Dillon to confirm that he'd selected the right style of ring than to drop a hint about engagement, he said.

"Plus she was trying to give me ideas on what she wanted for her birthday," he said. "In this case, it was a new necklace."

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On the day of the anniversary, he kept the ring in his pocket all day while going to classes.

“Just because I know she likes to snoop around for gifts,” Dillon said.

Dillon left the box in plain sight in their closet but didn't tell Tori.

“Apparently she decided not to snoop around and ended up working until I got home from school,” he said.

Once Tori arrived home, Dillon said she put on her sleuth hat and started snooping. Eventually she found the ring box in the closet.

“I simply laughed and said that it had been in plain view all day long,” he said.

Tori then walked into the living room and opened the box and Dillon got another laugh when he saw her reaction.

“It was a 25-cent ring out of a vending machine since she had once told me that she didn't want a super-expensive ring and would even accept a vending machine ring,” he said. “Apparently that wasn't completely true.”

Dillon then told his future bride to get ready for dinner.

“As she came back in the living room, I got down on one knee and proposed.”

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With the real ring.

To celebrate the special night, Dillon and Tori dined at their favorite cafe in Seward and then watched the movie "The Avengers."

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Tori and Dillon McMichael met shortly after Tori moved to Gothenburg in 2005.

"My little sister had been getting picked on by some boys at a basketball game so I yelled at him and his friends," she said.

Some time after that incident, Dillon and Tori joined the Evangelical Free Church's Solid Light Youth Group.

Although he dated one of Tori's friends for awhile, they got to know each other better when they were cabin leaders at Maranatha Bible Camp.

The couple officially began dating in October of Tori's senior year. Even though Tori is only nine months older than her fiance, Dillon was a sophomore at GHS at the time.

Their first date was to watch movies at Dillon's house with his twin brother, Brannan, and his best friend, Zach Hiebner.

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“We had our first kiss that night before I left with Branndon and Zach peeking from around the corner,” she said.

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Although the couple has had ups and downs, Tori said they always work through them and are ready to meet at the altar on Oct. 5 at the Evangelical Free Church in Gothenburg.

“I would love to get married outside with all the pretty fall colors but in Nebraska it’s best to plan for the worst weather,” she said.

On Oct. 5, 2011, she said it was almost 80 degrees and last year it snowed on that date.

After they take their vows, the couple is planning a reception at Walker’s Steakhouse & Lounge, surrounded by families and friends.

“That’s our main wish,” Tori said. “To simply have fun.”

Honeymoon plans include a cruise to Mexico or the Florida Keys or “somewhere else warm,” Tori said.

Since the engagement, wedding plans have gone smoothly, Tori said.

For example, an incident that could have caused stress didn’t.

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Tori said a bridesmaid dress ordered on the Internet and shipped to Gothenburg was a different color than what was shown online.

“That might have been a mood killer for most brides but I asked my aunt, my mother, and Dillon’s mom their opinions and just kept it,” she said. “The colors in the dress looked good together so what was the point in being too picky?”

Tori said she also believes in being frugal.

“Though this is supposed to be ‘my day,’ I would rather have it be fun and simple rather than elegant and pricey,” she said.

After Dillon and Tori became engaged, they had a sit-down talk with both sets of parents—Gregg and Sherri McMichael and Terry and Chrystal Preitauer—about wedding plans and what would work budget wise.

Tori said her mother and future mother-in-law have been helpful searching for wedding ideas for the couple.

“My mom searches Pinterest endlessly finding new ideas for the wedding and my dad is up for anything,” Tori said. “I call both of them a few times a week just to talk and see what’s going on.”

Pinterest is a content-sharing service that allows members to “pin” images, videos and other objects to a pin board.

Tori said she’s also had fun dress shopping with her mom.

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“The first store we walked in, we found four dresses and we had such a great time trying them on,” she said.

Mother and daughter even named one the “fishie” dress, modeled by Tori’s mom, because when she moved, the ruffles resembled fish gills.

Once the couple returns from their honeymoon, they resume their studies.

Dillon is studying John Deere Technology at Southeast and plans to return to work at LandMark Implement Co. in Gothenburg after he graduates in 2014.

Following graduation from GHS, Tori attended Mid-Plains Community College in North Platte where she received three associate degrees.

From Concordia, she’ll receive a bachelor’s degree in English, with a minor in photography in May, and plans to move back to Gothenburg the end of September.

Asked about something wild and wacky the couple could share about their relationship, Dillon said he drives about 350 miles round trip on some weekends to be with Tori when he’s doing hands-on training at LandMark Implement in Gothenburg during the week.

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